(c) The National Policy on Education, 1986 aims to achieve the objective of free and compulsory education for all children upto the age of 14 years by 1995. As enunciated in the policy document, States have been advised to adopt an array of meticulously formulated strategies based on micro-planning to ensure children retention in school and to achieve the target of Universalisation of Elementary Education. Centrally assisted schemes have been started to (i) provide essential facilities to primary schools through 'Operation Blackboard'; (ii) strengthening and reorganisation of the non-formal education programme to provide education to school dropouts, children from habitations without schools and girls who cannot attend whole day schools and working children; (iii) reorganise and restructure Teacher Education through establishment of District Institutes of Education and Training to increase teacher competence and provide academic support; (iv) new text books in accordance with the National Policy on Education, 1986 are being developed upto elementary level in a time bound programme by NCERT, and State Governments are expected to follow suit. Various incentive programmes like free supply of uniforms to girl students, free mid-day meals, free text books and attendance scholarships are being implemented by the State Governments/UT. Administrations.

Slow implementation of new education Policy due to financial constraints

40. SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are faced with serious resource constraints and as a consequence thereof, the implementation of the New Education Policy has become tardy;

(b) whether for the same reason the pace of introduction of the new vocational courses in more schools has become slow; and

(c) if so, what steps are proposed to be taken by Government to improve matters?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI L. P. SHAHI): (a) to (c) There is a resource constraint and the implementation of schemes under NPE has been affected by it. The scheme of vocational education was formulated on the basis of targets fixed in the NPE. Unless financial resources commensurate with the targets fixed in NPE are made available, the progress in implementation of the scheme would necessarily slow down.

IPKF in Srilanka

41. SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the role played by the Indian Peace Keeping Force in Sri Lanka in recent weeks;

(b) whether IPKF has been assisting the Government of Sri Lanka in the electoral process relating to the elections to the Provincial Councils contemplated in that country; and

(c) by when IPKF is expected to be withdrawn from Sri Lanka?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) The IPKF is in Sri Lanka under the terms of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement for the implementation of the Agreement and to assure the safety and security of all communities in the North-Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. It continues to perform this task.

(b) It is not part of the IPKF's mandate to assist the Government of Sri Lanka in tasks which are specifically related to elections. However, in keeping with its mandate, the IPKF continues to provide appropriate security in the North-